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EXCISE

## PRC/TAIWAN: NEW CROSS-STRAITS ORGANIZATION

The PRC established a nongovernmental association for relations across the Taiwan straits (ARATS) yesterday, according to press reports. Intended as a counterpart to Taiwan's unofficial straits exchange foundation (SEF), ARATS plans—under the direction of the Taiwan affairs office of the PRC state council—to focus on strengthening non-official cross-straits relations, cooperation in combating smuggling and piracy, and settlement of disputes.

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